

*Hark, when the night is falling,
Hear! Hear the pipes are calling,
Loudly and proudly calling, down thro' the glen.
There where the hills are sleeping,
Now feel the blood a-leaping,
High as the spirits of the old Highland men.*

DAY 1

August 5, 2004

I arrived at Glasgow International Airport with the members of the Omaha Pipes & Drums after an uneventful and restless seven-hour flight from Chicago. We made arrangements for a bus to meet us at the airport and to also drive us to the various competitions while in Scotland. Robert, our bus driver, did an outstanding job of taking care of our needs.

We stayed at Sterling University during our stay. The University was built in 1966 and the buildings look the period – square government architecture. We stayed in the campus dorms in a variety of “flats.” Each flat consisted of five rooms - single bed, desk, sink and closet – communal shower and toilet, and commons room with a kitchen. Needless to say I didn't fit in the bed and hung out over the sides and end. But it was home for nine days.

After unpacking and a quick settling in, the first afternoon we had a short band practice to begin acclimating to the climate, time change, etc. Pipes can be temperamental to weather changes.

The remainder of the day I spent familiarizing myself with the campus. Our dorm was at the far end of the campus – a half mile hike to the student center. The campus had a soccer/football field, golf course, world-class swimming arena, sports center, and student commons with a theater, restaurant and two bars. Shuttle services ran from the University to Sterling on a regular basis and would become my major form of transportation to and from town.

The campus was previously the personal property of the Graham family, who handed it over to the Secretary of state in 1966 when it was chosen as the site for the University of Sterling. The estate's history dates back much further however.

One of the most obvious landmarks of the campus is Airthrey Castle. The first record of the estate is in a charter of King David granted prior to 1146. The estate appears to have been held by the Crown until 1370 when it was granted to Sir John Herice, Knight Keeper of the Castle of Sterling. The land passed into the possession of William, the third Lord Graham of Kincardine in 1472. William was succeeded by his

grandson John Graham who was killed at the Battle of Pinkie in 1547...on so on and so on.



I walked passed the castle each day on my way to and from the student commons or to catch a bus into town. One evening while returning to the dorms I walked up to the castle and peeked into the turret windows. A gentleman was standing outside having a smoke and asked in heavy Scots, “Do ya wanna a walk through?” Of course I did. The gentleman turned out to be a Sociology faculty at the university whose office was in the Castle.

The turret room on the right of the picture had hardwood inlaid parquet floors, carved wood paneling from floor to within two feet of the ceiling where hand-tooled and painted leather paper finished the decor. The fireplace was surrounded by heavy woodcarvings depicting the Battle of Colloden. My guide indicated that the carving was done by German woodcarvers and that the uniforms were Germanic and not accurate for the battle. Nonetheless, it was magnificent.

The castle is a collection of architectural pieces from all over the world - massive carved wood doors of obvious Persian origin, intricate Asian carved panels, friezes from Europe all adorned this most unusual collection.



The castle was used as a maternity ward after WWII and many of the children born at the Castle return for a visit. Sadly, the castle is being vacated this year because it cannot be fitted to being handicapped accessible. They can find no one to take over the management of the building and it will probably fall into disuse.



As with most castles, there was also a kirk (church). The church fell into disrepair decades ago although there are headstones of WWII.

Most of the headstones are what you would think of for a Gaelic cemetery.



The grounds include a large lake inhabited by geese and swans. The original lake after being dug was lined with three layers of clay before being filled with water.



A typical day for me was to get up at 6:00, walk over to the student center to check email, walk back to the "flat", either a morning or afternoon band practice, and then off on a trip. Back for a bite at the student center and a few Guinness – after all when in Rome....and then crash.

Tomorrow – a tour of Sterling.

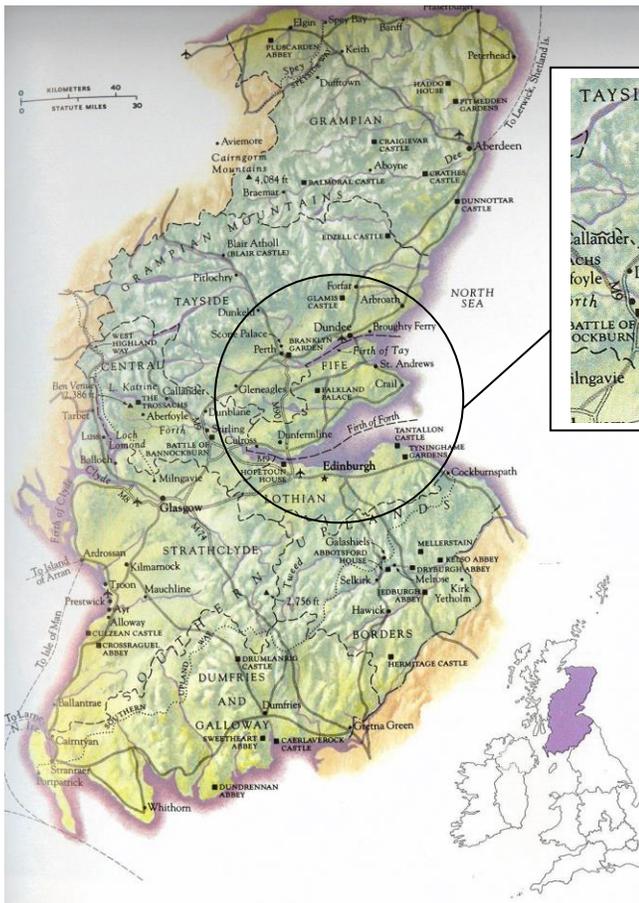
They are of great renown and compelling interest, and they are charged with rare beauty, so much so that critical analysis is stilled and description tends to dwell upon their undoubted poetic quality.

“The Scottish Castle, 1960”

DAY 2

August 6, 2004

The city of Stirling became the jumping-off point for my excursions into the surrounding lowlands. For those geographically impaired such as I, perhaps a map is in order.



As I mentioned earlier, a bus service ran regularly between Stirling and the University. The public transit system in Scotland is wonderful compared to what we have in the US. Trains and buses run regularly, on time (for the most part), and easily accessible until you get to some of the smaller burghs, towns, etc. that are not on a direct transit line.

We found a coffee shop our first day into Stirling and thereafter became a regular for double late’ and home made pastries to die for.

I found Stirling to be clean and the people friendly. I never saw a vagrant, peddler, street person, or gang member although I’m certain they exist in a city the size of Stirling (pop. 38,638).

HISTORY LESSON...

Stirling became an important settlement because it is the lowest crossing place over the River Forth. Furthermore it has a rocky outcrop, which was a natural place to build a fort. (The name Stirling is derived from Striveling, meaning place of strife). By the 11th century a royal castle was built on the crag. On its slopes was a village of wooden huts.

Sometime in the 1120's the king made it into a town by granting the townspeople a charter. (A charter was a document, which gave them certain rights). Stirling became a royal burgh with a weekly market and its own local government. The merchants of Stirling elected a provost to run the town.

Soon Stirling became a busy and important town. As well as a market it had an annual fair. In the Middle Ages fairs were like markets but they were held only once a year. Buyers and sellers would come from all over central Scotland to attend a Stirling fair. After 1447 Stirling had 2 fairs.

The main industry in Stirling was weaving wool. Stirling was also a small inland port. (The small ships of that era could sail up the Forth).

In the 13th century friars arrived in Stirling. Friars were like monks but instead of withdrawing from the world they went out to preach. There were 2 orders of friars in Stirling. The Dominicans were called black friars because of their black costumes. There were also Franciscan friars known as grey friars in Stirling. Like many medieval towns Stirling also had a leper hostel outside the walls.

In the 16th and 17th centuries Stirling continued to grow in size and prosperity. By the middle of the century it probably had a population of around 1,500. Although it would seem tiny to us by the standards of the time it was a respectably sized market town.

However in the 17th century Stirling declined in importance. That was partly because the king moved to England and Stirling castle gradually ceased to be a royal residence and became a barracks.

Like all towns in those days Stirling was dirty and unsanitary. There were outbreaks of plague in 1606 and 1645. The 1606 outbreak killed over 600 people, which at the time, was a large part of the town's population. The 1645 visitation also left Stirling depopulated. But each time the town recovered. In 1649 John Cowane built a 'hospital' (almshouse) for 12 impoverished merchants.

For most of the 18th century Stirling was a fairly small market town with a population of around 4,000. It was still a minor inland port.

At the end of the 18th century the industrial revolution began to transform Scotland. However it largely bypassed Stirling, which remained a quiet market town. However the traditional wool weaving industry continued. There was also a carpet weaving industry. Some cotton was also woven in Stirling. The first bank in Stirling opened in 1777.

At the end of the 18th century the town began to grow geographically. For centuries Stirling had been limited to the slope of the hill below the castle. In the late 18th century growth spread to the Port Street and Dumbarton Road area. Raploch also began to grow at the end of the 18th century. In 1799 10 new houses were built there.

In 1801, at the time of the first census, Stirling had a population of 5,271. By the standards of the time it was a fair sized market town. By 1821 the population had grown to 7,333.

In the early 19th century new streets were built north of the old town, Cowane Street, Irvine Place and Queen Street. In 1826 Stirling gained gas street lighting and in 1833 a new bridge was built.

However, like all towns in the early 19th century, Stirling was dirty and unsanitary and there was a disastrous outbreak of cholera in 1832. Partly as a result sewers were dug under the streets in the 1850s.

Furthermore the old town jail was built in 1847 and Stirling in 1857 Stirling gained its first modern police force.

In the 19th century Stirling remained a market town and it did not become an industrial centre. However in 1848 the railway reached Stirling and the town began to grow more rapidly. This was partly because well to do people moved to the town and commuted to work in Glasgow. For the middle class new houses were built west of the old town at Abercromby Place,

Clarendon Place, Victoria Place, Victoria Square and Queens Road. New streets were also built north of the old town such as Wallace Street, Bruce Street, Douglas Street and Union Street.

Also because of its strategic position as the 'gateway to the Highlands' Stirling began to develop as a tourist centre.

In the 1920s and 1930s the council began slum clearance and built council houses to replace the slums at Raploch and the Riverside. Many more council houses were built in the 1950s and 1960s. Furthermore in the 1950s many old buildings were demolished in the oldest part of the town.

What remains and what I say of the town are primarily Victorian structures.

Just outside the coffee shop was this view:



The statue is, of course, of William Wallace. They call it the "Little William" since in life William Wallace was actually taller than the statue.

Up the street, as seen in the background of this picture, is a typical Victorian building that has been renovated. It is unfortunate that the picture doesn't show the detail of the building with all of its statues.



A view down any street of Stirling looks something like this:



What became obvious during our stay is that there are no old cars. Almost every car I saw was less than three years old and mostly small sport cars. What is odd is that they were models not available in the US

even though they were US companies (Ford). I asked a taxi driver about this and he said that the cars become worthless after three years so most people don't keep them. I also noticed there is an EXTREME shortage of places to park and the obvious driving on the opposite side and "roundabouts".

Since I had band practice that afternoon, the best way to cram in Stirling was to take a tour bus. So, after late' and a roll (or two), I purchased a ticket on a double-decker and set out for a tour of Stirling.

Four of the band members – our side drummers, our Pipe major and Pipe Sergeant – asked to join me...well I couldn't very well say, "No."

We decided because of time we would only do part of the tour including the Wallace Monument and Stirling Castle. The other stops, like the cultural center, Bridge of Alan, etc., would have to wait for another trip.

The tour guide (Gayle) did a nice job and we basically were her only passengers so we asked a lot of questions. She had a memorized presentation for each stop and it made the ride enjoyable to hear about the various streets and buildings.

Wallace Monument

More history...



William Wallace is one of Scotland's greatest national heroes, undisputed leader of the Scottish resistance forces during the first years of the long and ultimately

successful struggle to free Scotland from English rule at the end of the 13th Century.

Records of Wallace's life are patchy and often inaccurate. This is partly because early accounts of his heroic deeds are speculative, and partly because he inspired such fear in the minds of English writers at the time, that they demonized him, his achievements, and his motives.

Several hundred years later in the 19th century, statues commemorating Sir William Wallace were erected overlooking the River Tweed and in Lanark. In 1869, the 220-foot high National Wallace Monument was completed on a hill near Stirling. This huge tower now dominates the area where the Scots fought their most decisive battles against the English in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries at Stirling Bridge and Bannockburn.



The tour bus drops you off at the foot of the hill at the Visitor's Center (of course) to purchase a ticket to tour the tower. You have the option of walking up to the

monument or riding a bus (for a fee), we chose to walk.

The monument close up is breathtaking. The smaller building to the side is a coffee shop and pub. We didn't have time to stop in.



The strange "spine" seen to the left of this picture and clearly in the first picture is the spiral staircase that climbs to the top of the monument – all 240+ stair. The stairway is wide enough to allow only one person on the stairs at a time.

As you enter through the doorway shown to the right, you can pick up an audio recorder for the tour at no cost.



There are several floors in the tower allowing you to rest and learn a little history. On the first floor is the history of William Wallace and the struggle for independence and his death. His famous broadsword – taller than most people at the time – is displayed.

The second floor contains a collection of marble busts of famous Scots, and of course there are depictions of Robert the Bruce and William Wallace.



If you climb all the way to the top, the view is spectacular. At least it was for me and one of our drummers. To the other drummer, it was a bit scary. We learned that he was afraid of heights and that the trip up the spiral staircase was about all he could handle. He hugged the walls of the tower top.

The top of the tower is designed to look somewhat like a crown:



Stirling Castle

On the way down we somehow lost the Pipe Major and Sergeant so the remaining drummers and I hopped back on the next tour bus and headed for Stirling Castle. The ticket allowed us to hop on and hop off anywhere and as often as we wanted during the day.

Stirling Castle was originally built in wood but in the late 13th century it was rebuilt in stone. In 1174 it was handed over to the English in return for the release of William I who had been captured in battle. The English handed it back in 1189.

The castle first comes to prominence during the reign of Alexander I (1107-24) when he dedicated a chapel there, he died at the castle in 1124 and was succeeded by his brother David. When William the Lion was captured by the English at Alnwick, he was compelled by Henry II to sign the Treaty of Falaise in

1174, which stated that the six most important castles in Scotland should be garrisoned by English soldiers. In 1189 the castle was returned to Scottish hands. Forty years after the Treaty was signed King William returned to Stirling where he died in December, 1214.

It was during the Wars of Independence that Stirling really came to prominence. After his triumphal capture of Berwick in 1296, Edward I of England took Stirling with ease. In the following year the forces of William Wallace gathered at Stirling Bridge and overthrew the English in the famous victory. However, the castle was once again in English hands a year later. When the Scots again laid siege the Governor, John Simpson, appealed for support from Edward this was refused and on surrender of the castle Sir William Oliphant was entrusted with custody.

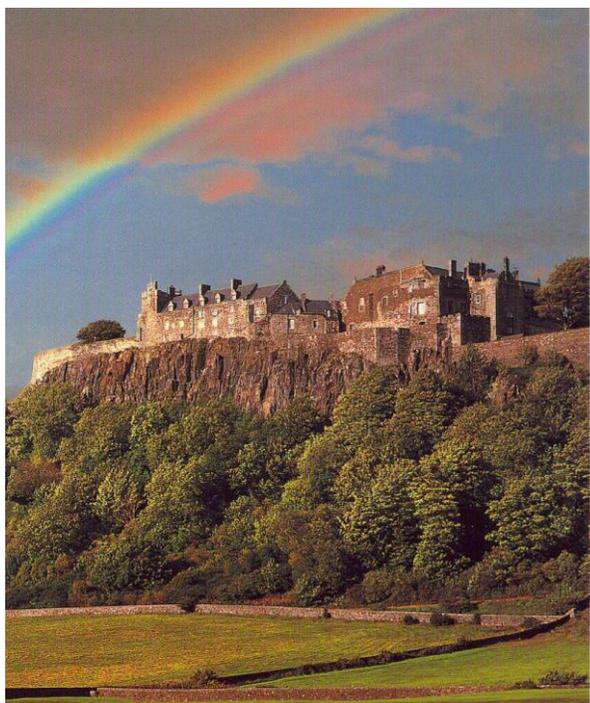
In 1304 the castle was the last stronghold in the patriots hands and in April of that year Edward began his great siege. For three months the defenders held out until their imminent starvation, rather than the success of Edwards tactics, forced them to surrender. For ten years the castle was held by Edward's forces until in 1313 Edward Bruce blockaded the fortress and forced Edward II to meet King Robert the Bruce's forces at Bannockburn. Once again the Scottish forces inflicted a heavy defeat upon the English and the castle was surrendered to King Robert. King Robert then set about destroying the fortifications of Stirling to prevent it being used as an English garrison. After the defeat at Halidon Hill, Stirling was once again under English control.

In 1337 the strengthened castle was besieged by Sir Andrew Moray, but was relieved by Edward III. Recapture by the Scots was not long delayed for in 1342 the garrison was forced to yield. With the accession of the Stewart's Stirling once more became a Royal abode. In 1452 James II murdered William 8th Earl of Douglas at Stirling and threw his mutilated corpse out of a window.

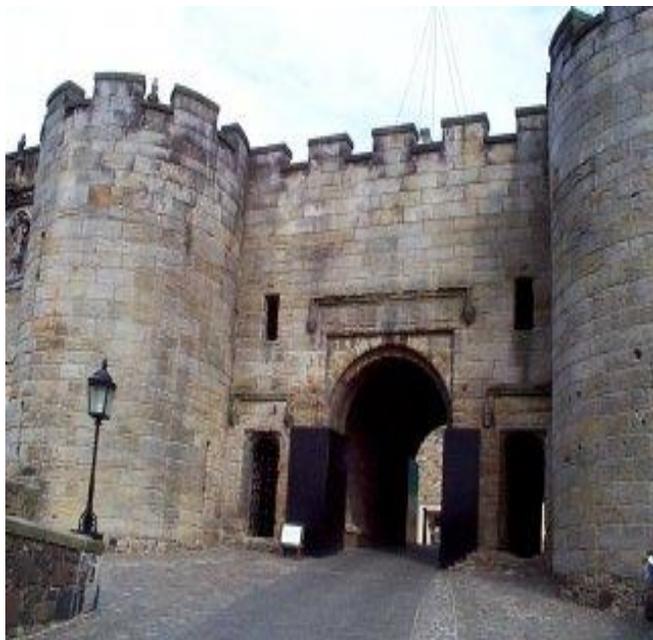
On the 9th of September 1543 the young Queen Mary was crowned in the chapel royal at Stirling. On her return to Scotland from France in 1561 Queen Mary asleep in her bed at Stirling was almost overcome by smoke when a candle set fire to the curtains in her room. In 1566 Stirling was once again chosen as the refuge of a royal infant when the two month old Prince James (later James VI) was transported there.

In 1651 General Monk who was in charge of Cromwell's forces, sieged Stirling and the Governor was forced to yield after a mutiny by his garrison. After the restoration the castle reverted to the Earl of Mar and his heirs, but the privilege was withdrawn after George I suspected them of having Jacobite sympathies. Subsequent keepership was held by the

Crown until in 1923 King George V restored it in favor of the Earl of Mar and Kellie.



You enter through the fortified gate and step back into history.



There was another ticket to purchase for the tour, but our tour-buss pass got us a 10% discount everywhere we stopped so it paid for itself in the long run.

The buildings showed their centuries of age and deterioration but remained beautiful. As we passed through the gate, one of the guides stated that there

was a tour in progress and we were welcome to join them – which we did. Being limited in time before practice we were scrambling to cover the grounds.

Our tour included the courtyard between the Royal Chambers, however the chambers themselves were not open because they were being renovated to their original appearance.



One of the buildings we entered was the Royal Chapel as seen here from the outside and an interior view.



The ceiling is new, but is an accurate reproduction of the original. There were two immense tapestries not seen in this picture that were stunning!

Another building we entered on the tour was the Great Hall:





The Great Hall is painted gold on the exterior. During renovations it was found that the walls were probably a yellow-gold. In all likelihood the entire castle was painted this color.

Within the Great Hall is the throne.



The room is large enough that during one banquet, the room was flooded and an epic sea battle was recreated.

We had just enough time to visit the military museum of the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders.



The collection of banners, regimental flags, arms, trophies etc. is indescribable.



There is a great web site at <http://www.argylls.co.uk/museum.html> if you want to take a virtual tour.

We had just a few minutes before catching the next bus back to Stirling and then a second bus back to the University and a three-hour practice session.

Tomorrow: North Berwick Competition.

A quaint and quiet little place, its houses were chiefly thatched and had outside stairs and picturesque outshots overhanging the street on beams of wood and pillars of stone.

'The White Cockade' by James Grant

Day 3
August 7, 2004



The Royal Burgh of North Berwick is a picturesque town situated on the shores of the Firth of Forth.

Royal Burghs, essentially were privileged communities granted rights by the king to enable them to develop internal and external trade. Within this only the burgesses could carry on any kind of retail trade even in native commodities.

A person could become a burges by paying a substantial fee to the town council after proving they had served an apprenticeship in the town and was a member of the burgh Trade Society. The burgesses were peasants first, rising to become small merchants or craftsmen with the right to market and the exclusive monopoly of trade and carrying on crafts within the burgh.

Most of the burgesses time was taken up by prosecuting unprivileged men who had been caught retailing foreign wares or sneaking on board a ship with a bribe for the skipper and a parcel of petty goods to be sold overseas. The result of these privileges held by a small clique of interconnected families inevitably lead to corruption. Town Council contracts went to the provosts' friends, the property of the burgh was let at derisory rents to relatives, and burges rights were sold for private gain.

Our bus arrived early in the morning to take us to the North Berwick Games. It was a scenic hour's drive through the countryside towards the coast.



The Burgh is best know for its world-class golfing. We, however, we more interested in their world-class pipe competition.

Our drive took us through town where we could see Bass Rock jutting out of the Firth of Forth.



We also drove by the War Memorial on our way to the games.



The North Berwick Highland Games take place on the Recreation Park and hosts an International Open Pipe Band contest, as well as the Lothians and Borders Pipe Band Championships. The Games also feature a Drum Majors Championship, National Highland Dance events, and the traditional Highland Games themselves, such as caber tossing, shot putting and hammer throwing.

The Games have grown in strength over the years and now regularly attract over 10,000 visitors. Together with the Highland Games competitions and Highland Dancing, catering tents providing food and drink, funfair amusements, trade and charity stalls, all help to provide something for everyone and a champion day out for all the family. The games serves as a preliminary to the Worlds the following weekend.

The games and competition themselves weren't any different that what we experience in the US except for the size. We compete in Grade 4. There were 20 Grade 4 bands competing as well as Grade 3, 2 and the professional Grade 1.

We had several family members traveling with the band – taking advantage of the group travel rate. They helped in locating resources, making certain we were in the practice circle and competition ring on time etc. They also had time themselves to sight see.



Several people chose to climb the hill (seen in the background) to visit Berwick Law.

I didn't venture too far from the grounds.

But here is what they saw...



Whale's jawbones mounted on top of Berwick Law. They were renewed in the 1850s by landowner Sir Hew Hamilton-Dalrymple from an old Dunbar whale ship, and more recently replaced in 1936.



This building was erected in 1803 as a signal station during the Napoleonic Wars.

What I could see of the town from the competition area looked like this:



North Berwick was our first competition in Scotland against Scottish bands and judged by Scottish judges. My hope was that we would place in the top half of the competition.

You have to keep in mind that Soccer and Piping are the national pastimes in Scotland and Ireland (besides drinking). They start at age 8 and are competing by age 10. The average age of our band is probably 40 with some in their 60's.

For those not familiar with pipe band competition, the band marches up in military formation to a starting line. The band is brought to "At Ease" while the Steward talks to the Pipe Major and signals for the start. The band is brought to attention then a formal "Pipe's Up" – a three stage movement to bring the pipes from the hip to the shoulder. The Pipe Major then calls off the tempo – "By the Right, Quick March" – drum roll for three beats, Pipe drones for two beats then the pipes play. We competed with 11 pipers, two tenor drummers and three side (snare) drummers.

The band marches forward to an area designated by series of circles sprayed on the grass. Pipe Bands competed in a circle facing inward. The sound then projects upward.

There are four judges: two piping judges, one drumming judge, and one ensemble judge. The ensemble judge is listening for the balance between the pipes and drums and how well they play together. The combination of scores from the four judges determine the band's placing. You have less than four minutes to win or lose the competition. For pipers, it's blowing steady, fingering, expression and unison. For drummers its unison and expression. An early drone or a trailing cut off can cost the band the games.

Unique to North Berwick are the competitions within the competition. There are numerous trophies and awards for regional and local bands competing against other bands in their region.

I'm relying on memory here. I know we placed 8th overall in Grade 4 beating out 12 other bands including some local favorites. Our piping score's were impressive – a forth and a sixth place. To finish in the top ten was more than I thought possible for the band's first competition in Scotland. The judges' comments included "Very Professional Performance."

In between competitions, I had time to listen to the Grade 1 professional bands and to watch the Drum Major competition. It's amazing what a persona can do with a mace. Even here, there are youth competing. From what I could tell of the competition, there are several stages. One part of the competition is Dress and Department. The judges measure kilt

hose height, position of the flashes, and the entire appearance of the Drum Major. Then there is the mace work, done while marching to one of the local bands. Besides the typical up and down movement, there is the twirling, throwing in the air, around the neck, around the back etc. You have to see a competition to appreciate the art.

The awards are given out and the winners announced at the end of the day (5:00) at "Massed Bands." There were dozens of trophies given for the top bands in each Grade as well as solo competitions and regional/local competitions. They obviously had a lot of sponsors. Included with most of the awards was a bottle of Scotch (of course). In one instance they had to have an adult come forward to receive the bottle since the award was going to a youth band.

For me, the capper was the parade. We were asked to participate in the parade through the burgh of North Berwick following massed bands. All of the busses were moved to the end of the parade so we had to walk that direction anyway.

Each band filed out of the competition grounds and played the entire length of the parade – probably some 2+ miles. We wound our way through narrow streets of Victorian shops and homes PACKED with cheering people. It gave you shivers! The sound was unbelievable – imagine 1,000 pipers marching down a narrow street.



It

Robert was waiting for us with the bus at the end of the parade to shuttle us back to the University.

Tomorrow: Bridge of Alan Competition.

Day 4 August 8, 2004



Bridge of Allan is situated less than three miles from the center of Stirling and within walking distance (2 mi.) of the University. It began life as a small rural village, mainly made up of cottages and mills. The wooded hill above the town is called mine woods where copper was mined as early as the 16th century and at intervals thereafter right up to 1807. The main audit (entrance shaft) of the mine can still be seen today in mine woods. The copper was used in the mint at Stirling to produce the first coinage of "bawbees" for the coronation of Mary Queen of Scots in 1543. In the 18th two more shafts were created to drain spring water from the mine. This mineralized water soon attracted large numbers of people who came to "take the waters" due to its alleged healing powers. In 1820 samples of the water were analyzed and shown to be rich in dissolved minerals. This eventually led to the development of the Spa.

Most of the buildings that you see today in Bridge of Allan are from the Victorian era. This is because there was a spate of building work that took place when the village became a Spa town. Spas were a popular past time of the Victorians throughout Britain and the Spa at Bridge of Allan attracted many people mainly made up of successful merchants and their wealthy families from the nearby cities of Glasgow & Edinburgh. It was common for them to purchase a holiday home in the village and come to Bridge of Allan for holidays.

The Spa routine began around the wells in the early morning, where it was recommended to drink four pint tumblers of mineral rich water which was pumped from the local spring. The rest of the day spent enjoying fresh air activities such as walks, Riding, Angling and in warmer months swimming in the "Allan Water."

There are many Victorian landmarks in Bridge of Allan. One of the most impressive is the fountain of Nineveh, complete with its cast-iron Doric column it stands half way down Fountain Road. This was an 1851 whimsy of the owner of the Westerton Estate which was named to commemorate the excavations going on at the time at the site of the original Nineveh (on the River Tigris in modern day Iraq). There is also a 4-faced Victorian clock outside the Westerton Bar

and a Victorian Provosts Lamp in the local Gardens across the road.

Other interesting buildings include the 1858 Holy Trinity Church, now celebrated for the elegant furnishings added in 1904 by internationally acclaimed Scottish architect, Charles Rennie Mackintosh. The Museum Hall opposite Pullar Park, now awaiting renovation after some years of dereliction. It was hosts to many dances, exhibitions and concerts for many decades including the Beatles in the 60s – although they were booed off the stage.

Bridge of Allan is one of Scotland's premier Highland Games attracting crowds of between 10,000 and 15,000. The games field is situated in a spectacular setting nestled between Stirling Castle, The Ochil Hills and the Wallace Monument, made famous by the Braveheart blockbuster movie.

Scotland in the early days was ever a warlike nation. If the Scots were not fighting someone else, they were fighting amongst themselves. Indeed, some of the bloodiest parts of Caledonian history recall the feuds between clans. Probably the most fabled among these is the tragic story of Glencoe, where the Campbells rose in the night and murdered their hosts, the MacDonalds.

Clan chiefs had to be ever alert to the threat from others and the need to keep his men sharp and battle practiced. Presumably to stop them from knocking lumps out of each other, "games" or "competitions" were organized to allow these warriors to test their strength and fitness against each other.

Over time these events were gathered together, forming the first "Highland Games" where clans could eventually compete in marginally less warlike situations.

Today's Highland Games are much more civilized, of course, although the echoes of history remain, particularly in the heavyweight events.

The games themselves offers a full athletics program including the crowd pleasing heavyweight competitions, nearly 200 highland dancers, approximately 1500 pipers, wrestling, tug-of-war, cycling on the same field!. There were three competition circles, again for Grades 4 through 1, and literally 10 feet away someone might be throwing a 40 pound hammer, zipping by on a bicycle, or racing by on foot. From a spectator's perspective it was wonderful. There was also a large fair and vendors.



ed bands was massed confusion. I'm certain
 ose bands who compete here every year knew
 ey were doing, but even marching on to the
 as in a confusing pattern. It was during the
 ; that we found out that we took a second and
 piping. I was shocked. I knew we sounded
 ut a second and Forth! WOW!

y during massed bands all the bands play a
 n unison – or so the theory goes. The Grand
 all calls the tune, which in most cases is
 hland Laddie played at breakneck speed. It really
 ; impressive to hear 1,500 pipers and another 6-7,000
 rammers all playing together. They do this at the US
 ames, but it's usually to Amazing Grace and at a
 uch slower tempo. Then the bands marched off in
 ome illogical order we never figured out. It looked
 ke a traffic jam and just as noisy.

obert was waiting for us at the bus and it was a
 quick shuttle back to the University for a bite and a
 drink.

Tomorrow: Borthwick Castle and the NN Investiture.

that they had called our name three times and we
 were at risk of being scratched. The Pipe Major
 spoke to the Steward explaining that we were given a
 set time and were not informed of any change.
 Thankfully, the next band allowed us to go on and we
 pulled off a good performance regardless of the
 additional stress. We finished in Grade 4 with a 6th
 place out of 30 bands. The piping judges gave us a
 second and a forth.

After the competition, we had time to grab a bite to eat
 and watch some of the games. I had the fish and
 chips – go figure. There were two immense planks of
 hand-batter and deep fried cod on a mound of fries.
 Smothered in salt and vinegar, I couldn't finish the
 meal.

“No king should settle down in Tara with a view to assuming the sovereignty of Ireland till he should first wear the nasc niadh round his neck.”

Day 5
August 9, 2004



Knight of the Golden Collar

The terms are often confused, and often needlessly distinguished. The term knighthood comes from the English word *knight* (from Old English *cniht*, boy, servant, cf. German *Knecht*) while *chivalry* comes from the French *chevalerie*, from *chevalier* or knight (Low Latin *caballus* for horse). In modern English, chivalry means the ideals, virtues, or characteristics of knights. The phrases "orders of chivalry" and "orders of knighthood" are essentially synonymous.

Succinctly, a knight was a professional soldier. The old "citizens' armies" of Antiquity had been replaced by professional armies. This trend was reinforced by the appearance in the 8th century of the stirrup, which made mounted men much more powerful and turned cavalry into the most important element of medieval armies. But being a mounted soldier was expensive, since it required enough income to buy and sustain a horse and the equipment (armor, weapons) to go with it. Thus, those who were too poor to provide this service became mere peasants, attached to the land.

In feudal society as it emerged in the 10th century, everyone held land from someone else in exchange for goods or services of some kind. Men who were not free provided a portion of their crops and labor services. Men who were free provided military service, either personally or (if they were rich enough) using others' services. Thus, a man who held his estate in knight's fee owed service as a knight to his lord. A more sizeable vassal, when called by his liege, would summon his knights and form a contingent in his liege's army.

Prior to the arrival of Norman mercenaries in 1167 AD, Irish Kings retained the equivalent of knights appointed from amongst their kin and nobles. This was supplemented in time of war by conscription of

Kern (catharnach, meaning friendship or mutual benevolence), who served as basic infantry in any conflict. Long before the advent of Christianity and the concept of European chivalry evolved, Canon Bourke, examiner in Celtic History at the Royal University of Ireland, identifies 5 separate military orders:

1. **An Niagh Nasc** - knights of the golden chain, in modern Gaelige "niachas" is used as an alternative for the word chivalry
2. **An Curraidh na Craoibhe Ruaidhe** - knights of the Red Branch, lit. Champions of the red branch or bough
3. **An Clanna Deagha** - knights of Munster, lit. Family of Deagha
4. **An Clanna Baoisgne** - knights of Leinster, lit. Family of Baoisgne
5. **An Clanna Morna** - knights of Connaught, lit. Family of Morna. (There existed in Connaught the Gamhainride - literally knights of the calf, perhaps one and the same)

The original order of the **Niadh Nask** was created by Terence MacCarthy, a native of Belfast who assumed sometime in the early 1980s or late 1970s the style of *MacCarthy Mór*. The Chief Herald of Ireland withdrew Terence MacCarthy's recognition as clan chief and courtesy title of MacCarthy Mór in July 1999.

In 2001 the order was restructured as a nobiliary fraternity under the guidance of Charles McKerrell of Hillhouse. The US branch is organized as a charitable "not for profit" corporation governed by a Council chaired by the Ceann Cumain.

Enough history...

It was fortunate for me that an investiture of the Nasc Niadh coincided with my trip to Scotland. Many of the members attend the Border Gathering of the clans the previous week and stay over for the Arts Festival in Edinburgh.

That morning I realized that I had left my invernness (rain cape) on the bus. Fearing that I would never see it again, I knew that I had to find a replacement. Band rules are that if it is raining and one member does not wear their cape, then none of the members can wear theirs...so I better find one. Since it was pouring down rain that day, I borrowed another cape for the event.

I had packed my tuxedo since I wasn't certain of the attire and since formal highland attire requires a Prince Charlie jacket - which I don't own. As it turned out, I could have worn my kilt jacket, but the tux was a

safe and acceptable alternative. It was an opportunity for me to wear my Nasc Niadh breast star, the St. Sylvester Medal, and my Knight Commander neck ribbon for the Templars...I don't get to wear them together too often.

I had to rush to catch a bus looking like Batman in my cape. In Stirling I had to catch the train to Edinburgh. The train system in Scotland is wonderful...once you learn to read the schedule. I had purchased a four day pass ahead of time. The pass allowed me to hop on and off the train as many times as I wanted for four days within an eight day period. The ride is very smooth and the trains, for the most part, run on time. I enjoyed riding the trains while I was there.

Edinburgh train station is a picture of Victorian architecture. It is exactly what you would imagine an old steam train rolling in to. Think of the Harry Potter movies and the train station – that's what the Waverly Station in Edinburgh looks like.

I probably looked strange to the passengers standing there in a black rain cape and tuxedo.

At Edinburgh, I caught a cab for the 12-mile ride out to Borthwick Castle. Because of the Arts Festival, the traffic was heavy. The cab driver didn't know where the castle was, so luckily I had downloaded directions. The meeting was at 11:30 and I arrived at 11:25, just ahead of the other guests.



Only twelve miles from Edinburgh in a pastoral valley, this romantic castle stands on the summit of a knoll on the periphery of the romantic Borders immortalized by Sir Walter Scott.

Borthwick Castle built in 1430, is unique and exclusive. Once the refuge of Mary Queen of Scots and the Earl of Bothwell and besieged by Oliver Cromwell in 1650, the atmosphere and grandeur of its

romantic past have been lovingly cherished and maintained.

The castle is still owned by Lord Borthwick who is a friend of the Niad Nask's patron Lord and lady McKerrel, so they had use of the castle at no cost. He leases it to a hotel agency run by the National historic society for tax purposes.

It was a small group. There was a US Colonel from JAG whom I know from the Templars and his daughter, a couple from South Africa, a representative from the Lord Lyon of Scotland, a female reporter who covered the air crash at Lockerbe, an official from Ireland, Lord and Lady McKerrel from Ireland, and a couple others. All lovely people and a delight. I can't imagine why they ever wanted me in the group. These are people with wealth and fame.

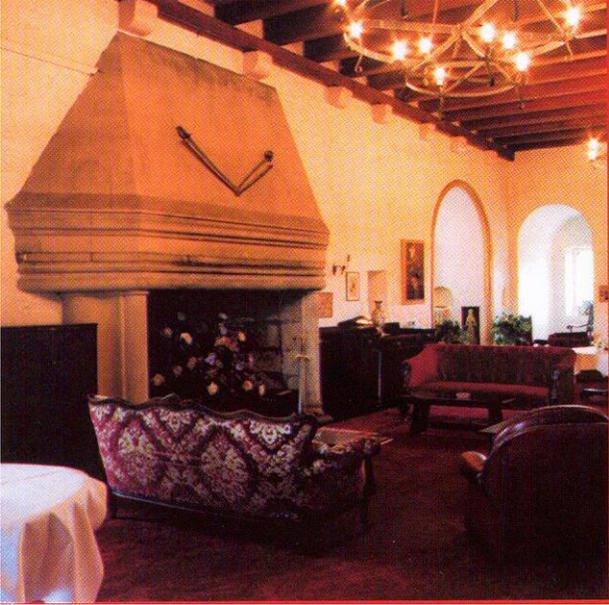
We started the investiture with Champaign in the Garrison Room. The Garrison Room is at the top of the castle and a narrow spiral staircase.



A young piper announced our arrival. The piper turned out to be the two-time Scotland champion piper under 18.

I didn't realize I was to be re-invested, so there was a formal speech by Lord McKerrel and a laying of the chain on the shoulder and I was officially inducted.

We went down one floor to the State Room.



This is the floor that Mary Queen of Scots is said to have spotted the troops that were to take her back to England and her eventual death at the hands of her cousin, Queen Elizabeth.

Mary's chamber is off to the side.



We had a wonderful presentation by the executive director of the institute that produces the Scottish National Dictionary. She and a small staff have accumulated several centuries of words and history into a concise dictionary. They are funded entirely by grants. It was fascinating to speak with her at lunch.

Lunch was held in the Great Hall. The hall is just what you would expect of a castle. Not as big as the movies, but just as impressive with the arms and armor and paintings.



Here we dined on a luscious green salad with fresh seafood, lamb with mint sauce, baby potatoes, peas, and a chocolate éclair.

We then moved over to the fireplace for coffee and rum balls for the business meeting. No need to bore you with the details of the meeting.

I had the castle call a cab and a few minutes later I was on my way back to Edinburgh. I had a nice chat with the taxi driver along the way. The major industry of the area used to be mining. His family had always been in mining until now. The Queen found out it was cheaper to import coal from Portugal and so his father and the other miners went on strike for a full year. The strike closed the mines and the smaller burghs and village economies collapsed. He and his brothers got into driving cabs out of high school.

I caught the next train back to Stirling but had missed the band practice that afternoon. They knew I would probably not make it back and I caught my share of razzing for walking into the student center in a tux with medals on.

Tomorrow: Scone palace, Perth, and Arbroath Abbey.

Day 6
August 10, 2004

Tuesday was a day of rest for the band. Several members were planning overnight trips to Oban or Inverness and the day off afforded them extra time. I took the opportunity to plan my longest excursion to Perth and Arbroath – both accessible from the Scotrail system.

After a morning late' and pastry, I went to the train station in Stirling and boarded the northbound towards Perth.

Perth is the 'Fair City' of Sir Walter Scott's tale. It is also to some the fairest city in Scotland, lying at the centre of beautiful green countryside surrounded by rolling hills and on the north bank of the river Tay at the end of the red sandstone bridge built by Smeaton. Over the water from Perth is the 'village' of Bridgend which lies at the foot of the famous 'Hill of Kinnoull'.

Perth lies just south of the Highland boundary fault which separates the highlands from the lowlands and was once the ancient capital of Scotland near to Scone where the ancient kings of 'Alba' were crowned. King Kenneth MacAlpin (our ancestor) established his rule from Perth.

Perth was once a thriving market town as it was a major crossroad in Scotland with roads radiating in all directions; Dundee, Aberdeen, Inverness, Crieff, Stirling and Edinburgh, all of these lie on main 'A' roads leading from Perth. In the past Perth was a major railway junction with lines to all of these cities having two railway stations and a marshalling yard. Perth harbor was frequented by ships from all over the world and Perth even had its own Steam Packet Company - the 'DPL' or Dundee, Perth and London shipping line.

According to the cab driver I hired at the Perth train station to take me to Scone Palace, Perth's major industries used to be milleries for wool and for grinding oats. They also provided all the gruel for the area prisons.

Scone is a place that breathes history like nowhere else in Scotland. Today, in the 21st century, it is the home of the Earls of Mansfield, and a major attraction to visitors from all over the world. Fifteen hundred years ago, it was the capital of the Pictish kingdom and the center of the ancient Celtic church. In the intervening centuries, it has been the seat of parliaments and the crowning place of Kings. It has housed the Stone of Destiny and been immortalized in Shakespeare's Macbeth.

Poised above the River Tay, the Palace overlooks the routes north to the Highlands and east through

Strathmore to the coast. The Grampian Mountains form a distant backdrop, and across the river stands the city of Perth. Two thousand years ago, the Romans camped here, at the very limit of their empire. They never defeated the warlike Picts, who later came to rule Scone, but the followers of St Columba had more success. By the early 7th century, a group of early Christians, the Culdees or servants of God, had established themselves here.



It was showering lightly when I arrived at the Palace. There were few tourists and after paying a modest tour fee, I entered the palace main floor.



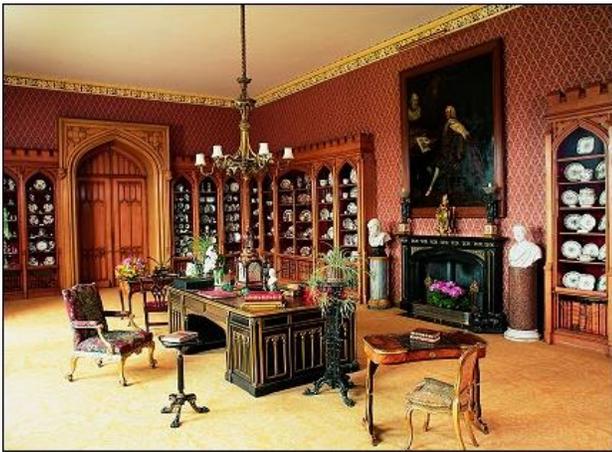
The State Drawing Room

Formerly the 18th century Dining Room of the Palace, this beautiful room is now the Drawing Room. The walls are clad in early 19th century Lyons silk and dominated by a huge pair of Royal portraits by Allan Ramsay of King George III and Queen Charlotte.



The State Dining Room

This very fine south-facing room is the first of the State Rooms. Its unique collection of large European ivories, amounting to no less than 72 pieces, quite takes the breath away.



The Library

This splendid room offers glimpses over parkland pastures to the River Tay, one of the most famous salmon rivers in the world. Beyond the river, the mountains around Ben Vorlich can be seen on a good day.

The Library now possesses fewer books than its name might suggest, their place having been taken by a breathtaking array of extremely fine quality porcelain. The Earl of Mansfield has the largest private orchid collection in the country; specimens are often displayed on the writing desk.



The Ambassador's Room

This room takes its name from David, 2nd Earl of Mansfield.

As Lord Stormont, he was Britain's Envoy to Dresden in 1756, then Envoy-Extraordinary to the Imperial Court of Vienna. From 1772 until 1778, he was British Ambassador to the French Court during the reign of King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette.

He later became Lord Justice General of Scotland and Lord President of the Council of the British Cabinet.



The Inner Hall

This spacious hall has north-facing windows and two 17th century carved oak fireplaces.

Among the treasures on display here is a pair of giltwood console tables; their swagged garlands are richly carved and very similar in execution and design to a table made for the Royal Palace in Warsaw.



The Long Gallery

The floor of this Gallery has been walked by many kings and queens, including Charles II on his way to his coronation on the Moot Hill in 1651; the Old Pretender (father of Bonnie Prince Charlie), who visited during the 1715 Jacobite Rebellion; Bonnie Prince Charlie, who visited during the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion; and Queen Victoria, who received a demonstration of the principles of curling using the polished floor of the Long Gallery in place of ice. Dating from 1580, this is one of the oldest parts of the Palace.

Downstairs is a restaurant and gift shop. Perth is also the home of Perth paperweights which Dad collects. What makes the Perth paperweights unique is the use of rods – bundles of colored glass that form a pattern and are stretched to be micro-thin and then re-bundled and put into a clear glass design. I found a paperweight for dad and an embroidered clutch bag for mother before heading out into the mist to tour the outlying buildings and garden.

Scone was the Ancient Crowning Place of the Scottish Kings. They were crowned on an ancient mound which has been known by many names. Two of its names - Omnis Terra (every man's land) and Boot Hill - come from an ancient tradition whereby emissaries swore fealty to their king by wearing the earth of their own lands in their foot-bindings or boots.

From the time of Kenneth MacAlpin, who created the Kingdom of Scone in the 9th century, all the Kings of Scots were crowned upon the Moot Hill, seated upon the Stone of Scone. Even after the Stone's removal by King Edward I in 1296, the Moot Hill continued to be the crowning place of the Scottish Kings. Probably the greatest historic event to take place at Scone was the coronation of Robert the Bruce, who declared himself King of Scots upon the Moot Hill on 25 March 1306. The last coronation held at Scone was that of King Charles II as King of Scots on 1 January 1651, some

nine years before he was restored to the English throne.



Standing on the Moot Hill is a small Presbyterian chapel. Like the Palace, it was restored in Gothic style around 1804. A replica of the Stone of Scone sits upon the Moot Hill, marking the site of the original.

As I contemplated how I was going to get a taxi back out to the Palace, I noticed that Perth had a Tour Bus service run by the same company as in Stirling and Edinburgh. So I purchased a ticket which would allow me to hop on and off. Since the next bus wasn't due for 15 minutes I strolled the gardens for a couple more photos.

This shot is at the original gate from the Palace to the city of Perth.



The next stop for the bus was the museum of the Black Watch. The Black Watch Regimental Museum is housed in historic Balhousie Castle set in its own grounds beside the North Inch in Perth.



A brief background history...

The origin of this regiment was the raising in 1725 of six independent companies of highlanders from clans which had remained loyal to King George I during the Jacobite rebellion of 1715, with the task of keeping peace and order in the highlands. Because of their job of 'watching' and the dark color of the tartan they wore, they became known as The Black Watch.

In September 1739 these companies were amalgamated into the 43rd Regiment of Foot, and as such their first action was against the French at the First Battle of Fontenoy in 1745. They became the 42nd Highland Regiment of Foot in 1751. In 1758 King George II granted this the additional title of 'Royal' and authorized the raising of a second battalion, which was amalgamated with the first battalion in 1762. Another 2nd battalion was raised in 1779 and became the 73rd Highland Regiment of Foot. This in turn raised a second battalion in 1806, which distinguished itself against Napoleon's troops at

Quatre Bras in 1815, but it was disbanded in 1817. Many battle honors were awarded to the regiment during the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries in the Americas, the West Indies, the Peninsular War, India, the Crimea and South Africa.

On 1 July 1881 the 42nd and 73rd were amalgamated into the 1st and 2nd Battalions of The Royal Highlanders (The Black Watch). A 3rd (Militia, later Special Reserve) Battalion was wound down in 1919. In 1908 the Volunteers of Dundee, Forfar, Perthshire and Fife, which had been raised in 1859, became the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th Territorial Battalions. During the First World War seven more battalions (8th to 14th) were raised. The 6th Battalion was awarded France's highest military honor, the Croix de Guerre, for its gallantry in July 1918 in clearing the Germans from the village of Chambrecy against great odds at the end of seven days of continuous fighting under the eyes of the French. The regiment lost 7993 killed during this war.

From 1881 the regiment was popularly known as The Black Watch. In 1922 it became officially known as The Black Watch (The Royal Highlanders), changed in 1937 to The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment). King George V became Colonel-in-Chief in 1912, succeeded on his death by his daughter-in-law Queen Elizabeth (later the Queen Mother). Eleven of her family, the Bowes-Lyons, had served in the regiment, her brother and a cousin being killed during the First World War. After her death in 2002 her place was taken by her grandson Charles Prince of Wales. Even now, however, in memory of its origins, those who serve in or have served in the regiment, more often than not refer to it as the 42nd or 'the forty twa'. The wearing of the distinctive red feather (Red Hackle) on the left side of the headdress is said to have begun during the American War of Independence. In August 1822 the Adjutant-General issued an order that it was 'intended to be worn exclusively by the Forty-Second Regiment'



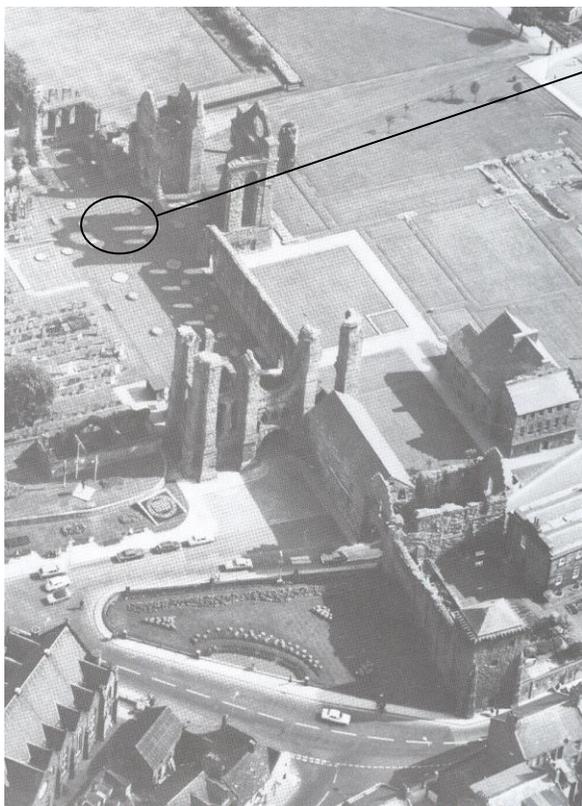
During World War Two six battalions of the regiment (1st, 2nd, 4th to 7th) were engaged at various times in military action against the enemy, losing just over 1740 officers and men killed. Three other battalions (8th to 10th) remained in the UK on home defense and training duties.

The museum is staff by retired Black Watch members. The collection of artifacts is priceless. Unfortunately, I could not spend more than an hour touring the displays before I had to hop by on the next bus to get back to the train station to make my connection to Arbroath Abbey.

I arrived in Arbroath station just before 5 PM. Fearing that I had missed the museum time, I took my bearings from a "You Are Here" map and walked briskly the half dozen blocks to the Abbey...it's the largest structure in town so you really can't miss it. When I arrived, I found I was the only person on the grounds other than the museum staff. I purchased the tour booklet and headed out on an all-too-short tour.

The reason for wanting to visit the Abbey was that it was founded by an ancestor, King William the Lion of Scotland, who is buried on the grounds.

A birds-eye view of the ground shows just how immense the Abbey once was and how it dominated the city of Arbroath.



Arbroath Abbey was founded for monks of the order of Tiron in 1178 by King William the Lion. It is assumed that the community first lived and worshipped in temporary quarters. Construction of the more important communal and domestic buildings was probably begun first, followed by construction of the church when sufficient funds were available. In 1214 the church was advanced enough to receive the body of its founder. It was consecrated in 1233. This is the marker of William the lion's tomb.



On plan, the church is cruciform in shape. It had an aisled nave of nine bays and an aisled choir of three bays eastward of the central crossing, square ended presbytery of two bays, where the high altar was placed. The transepts flanking the central crossing each had two eastern chapels; over the central crossing was a tower.

The transept, like the rest of the church, was covered with a ceiling or an open timber roof. The roof space was lit by the large round windows now known locally as the "Round O."

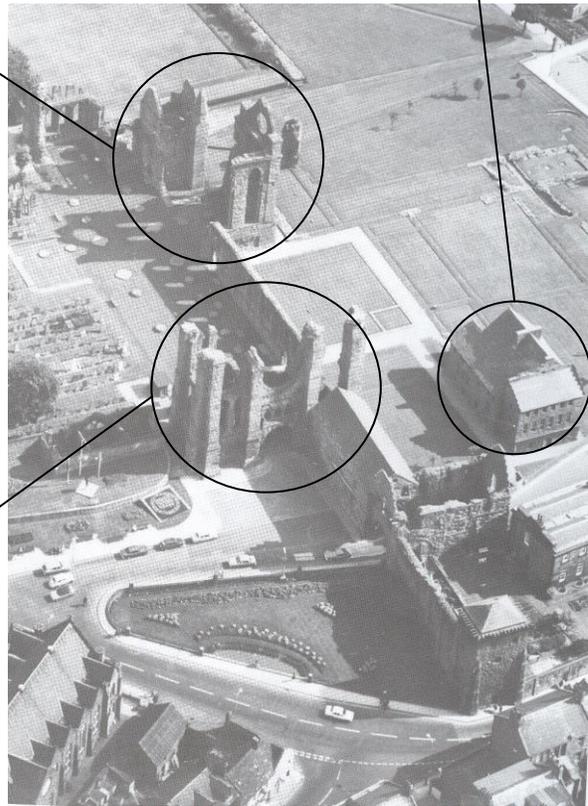


The building to the right is the two-storied sacristy which was added onto the church in the first half of the 15th (1411-1449) century. The sacristy itself occupied the ground floor and above it was a secure treasury. The sacristy is the most complete surviving part of the church.



The nave of the abbey church, looking backward towards the entrance front. The gallery, or tribune, above the archway and the remains of the two western towers can be seen.

The Abbot's House is at the south-west corner of the cloister around which the main monastic buildings were grouped. Within the house was a temporary display containing the original Declaration of Arbroath that confirmed the nobility's support of Scottish independence of English domination penned at the abbey in 1320.



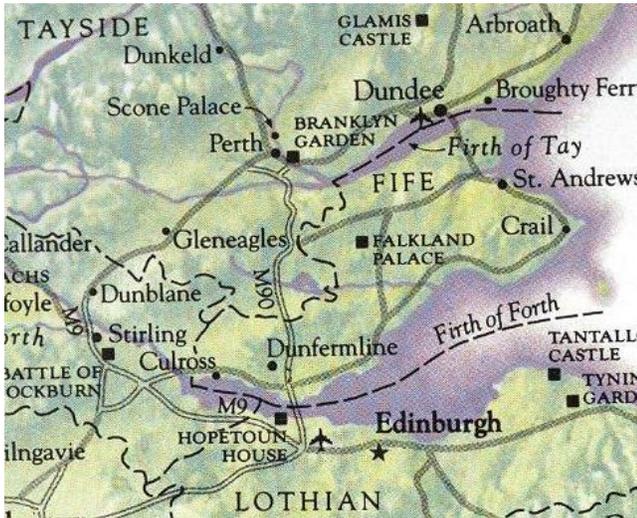
By the 18th century, the abbey was in ruin, not by violence or war, but because it outlived its original purpose. The abbey was eventually stripped of its altars, the monks died or moved on, the power of the church waned, and the abbey became a source of building material for the city of Arbroath.

There is so much more to tell, but like my trip, I'll cut it short. I ran back to the station to catch the last train from Arbroath to Stirling where I caught the bus back to the University.

TOMORROW: Dunfermline.

Day 7
August 11, 2004

Wednesday, I needed to stop by a shop to pick up an invernness (raincape) just in case our bus driver could not locate the one I left after the Bridge of Allan games. Since the shops don't open until 10, I went into Stirling for my usual latte' and pastry, swung by the shop and purchased the invernness and headed for the train station for Dunfermline.



Dunfermline could be accessed by train, but I would have to make several transfers. So, I decided to take a bus. The buses are many peoples' only transportation to and from the cities. They are efficiently run, clean, and on time. I purchased a round-trip ticket and fortunately the buss was departing in 10 minutes.

One advantage of taking the bus is that it makes frequent stops in all the small towns along the way...sometimes too many stops for my taste, so in that respect it was slow. What would have taken a car 30 minutes at most to drive, took near an hour on the bus.

One of the towns we passed through I wished I had more time to hop off and visit was Culcross. Culcross is the most complete surviving examples of a Scottish burgh of the 18th and 19th centuries. In the 6th century Culcross became a religious center and it is the birthplace of St Mungo the patron saint of Glasgow. The ruins of a chapel dedicated to Mungo can still be seen. The later prosperity of Culcross came when George Bruce developed a way of mining for coal and salt. Bruce's house, Culcross Palace is an outstanding example of a rich merchant's home.

You can see the palace and abbey from the road. Stopping in the town to pick up passengers was like stepping back centuries in time.

The buss rolled into Dunfermline about 11:00. I only had a couple of hours before I had to be back in Sterling for band practice. Knowing it would take just as long if not longer to get back. I checked the bus schedule and set off on foot to locate Dunfermline Palace and Abbey.

Dunfermline is also the home of the noted millionaire and industrial Andrew Carnegie. When I was touring Scone Palace, one of the wives of one of the Earls of Mansfield, was a Carnegie...but I don't know what generation.



Carnegie's home is now a museum. I did not have time to do more than take a picture of the museum.

The Andrew Carnegie Birthplace in Dunfermline is the cradle of the 'Star- Spangled Scotchman,' the emigrant weaver's son who forged a fortune in the steel furnaces of America and spent the rest of his life giving it all away.

Here in the Birthplace Memorial Hall endowed by his widow, Mrs Louise Whitfield Carnegie, are housed the treasures showered by a grateful world on the man of steel with a heart of gold.

The two-storey weaver's cottage where Andrew Carnegie was born on 25th November, 1835, is situated at the corner of Moodie Street and Priory Lane and within sound of the bells of the venerable Dunfermline Abbey, the Westminster of Scotland and burial place of Scottish kings.



On my walk from the Carnegie museum to the Abbey and Palace, I passed this impressive government building.



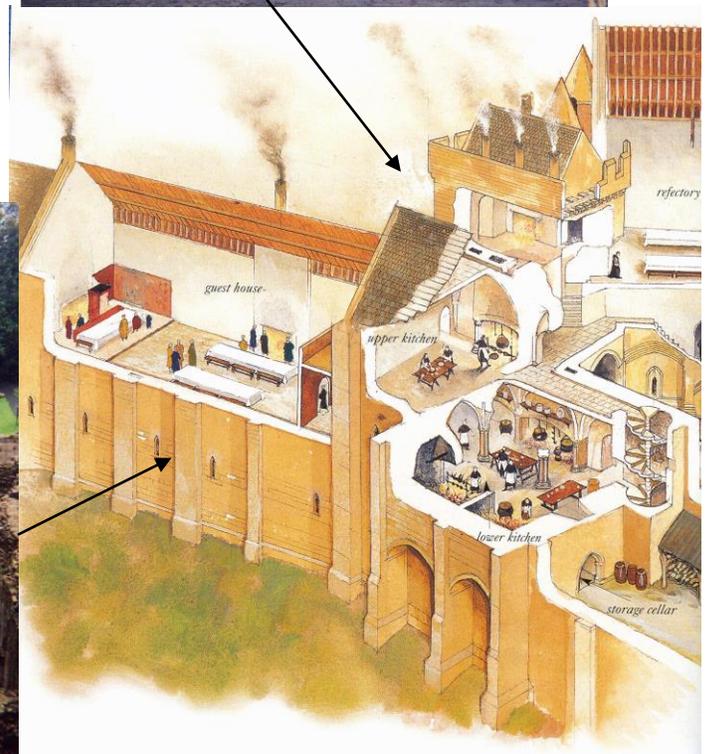
Dunfermline Abbey and Palace were together one of the largest and most impressive complexes in medieval Scotland. However, following the departure of the Scottish royal court for England in 1603, the palace was largely abandoned to its fate. Apart from the nave of the abbey church, which continued in use as the parish church of Dunfermline, everything else was left to go to rack and ruin. Some buildings were razed; others were left to tumble of their own accord. As a consequence, the once great complex is now but a shadow of its former glory, still with the power to impress but frustratingly incomplete and not easy to comprehend.

The Gust House, once served as the Royal Palace. The abbey was expected to provide hospitality to all who called on it. Accommodation was graded according to the rank of the visitor, and there were probably three hostels in the outer court. The structure was begun in the early 14th century, probably at the same time as the refectory.



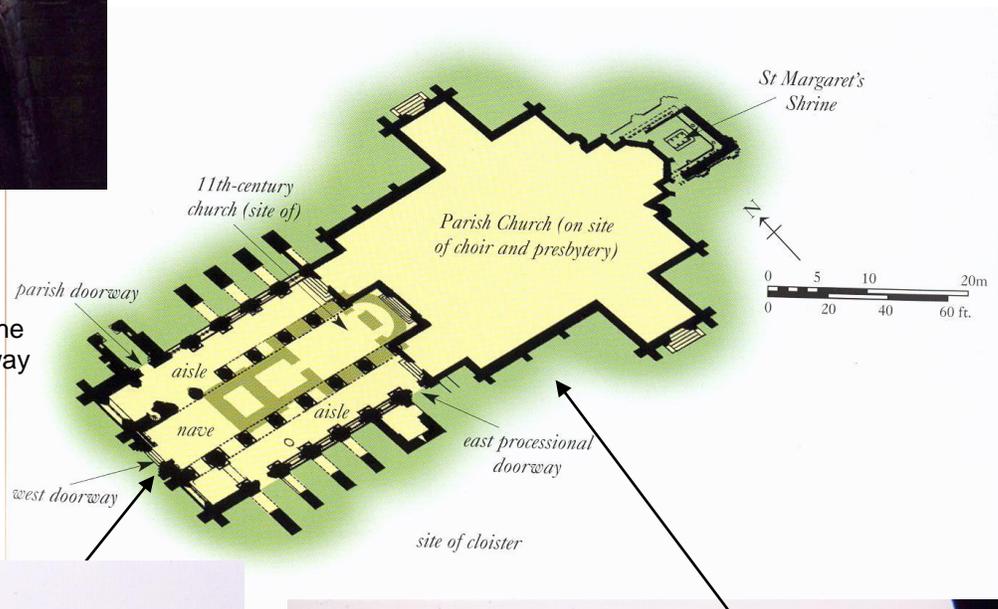
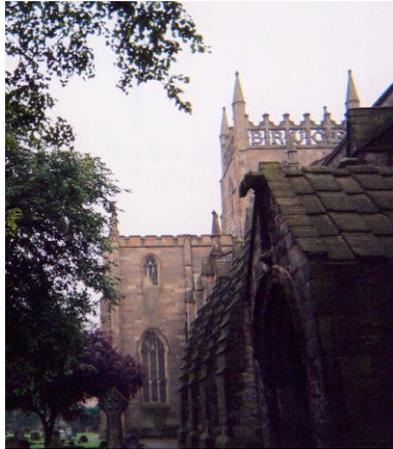
The Palace and Abbey were not hard to locate! They are massive!!! The attendant at the ticket office was extremely knowledgeable about the genealogy of St. Margaret and King Malcolm (descendants) and where to locate their graves.

I purchased a walking tour book and set out. The grounds were virtually void of tourists.



Of the great abbey church, only the nave survives. This western part of the building was accessible from the outset for ordinary people of the parish, hence its survival as the parish church after the Reformation, when all else was allowed to fall into ruin.

Along the top of the Parish Church steeple can be seen "ROBERT" on one side, "BRUCE" on the opposite and "THE" on either side. From any direction you see either Robert the Bruce or just The Bruce. The existing Parish Church was built on the site of the previous abbey church choir and presbytery in 1817.

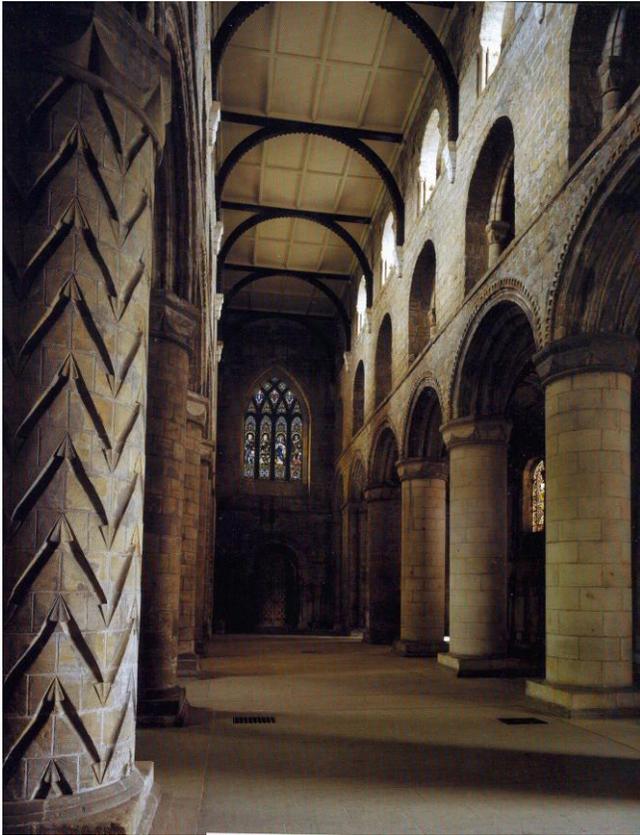


Along the north side of the nave is the parish doorway through which the lay congregation entered.

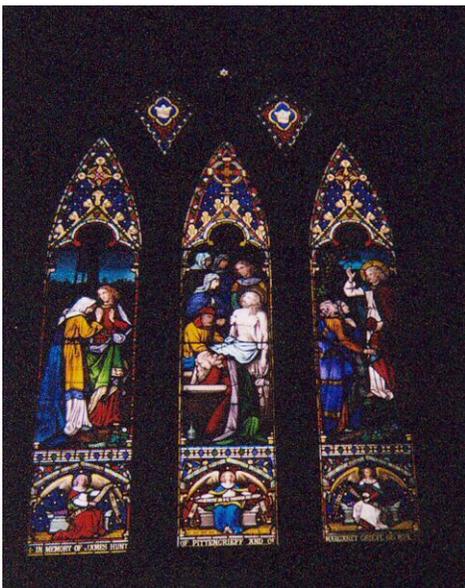


The Grand Processional entrance in the West front. This was used on only special occasions.

Entering the original nave, you are immediately struck with the original purpose of the Abbey, St. Margaret and Malcolm were originally interred between the two pillars with the "V" notches. This is a photo facing towards the grand entrance.



The windows were spectacular. To the right of this photo and closest to the parish entrance was a memorial to the architect of the abbey and above it this window.



The nave was effectively the outer part of the abbey church, accessible to all. It is remarkable that anything survives of the structure.

The nave is three stories high. At ground level, a tall arcade carried on cylindrical piers dominates the space, the semi-circular arches opening into flanking aisles. The nave was separated from the monk's choir to the east by two screen walls rising to perhaps a third of the total height of the nave.

The Parish Church (on site of the original choir and presbytery) is still used today. This is a view as you enter the parish Church looking east. The St. Margaret window is stunning and overlooks what once was St. Margaret's Shrine.



The best known royal buried at Dunfermline is that of Robert the Bruce in 1329.

He was buried in the middle of the monk's choir; his heart was buried separately at Melrose Abbey. A magnificent alabaster tomb was made for him in Paris, and fragments of that tomb, along with the mortal remains of the great king himself, were discovered by chance during the construction of the parish church in 1818.



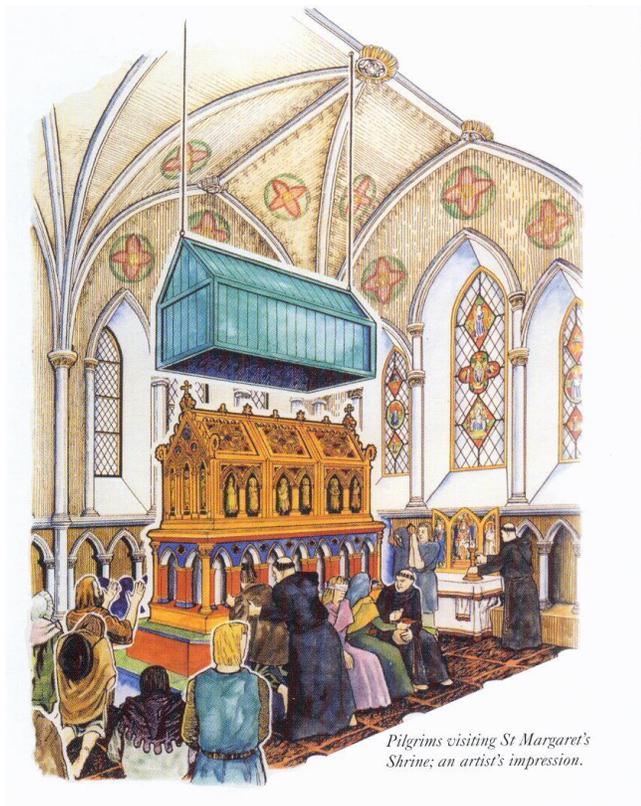
His tomb is marked by a brass monument incised with his figure made in 1899 and placed beneath the pulpit.

His skull has been subject to forensic investigation and reconstruction. A life size reproduction of what he is

believed to look like is located at the cultural center in Stirling.

Queen Margaret was canonized as a saint by Pope Innocent IV in 1250, and a new chapel was built to receive her relics. In June of that year, her mortal remains were exhumed from their original resting place under the floor of the church nave, placed in a fir casket encased in gold and studded with precious jewels, and carried in procession to the new shrine.

An artist's depiction of St. Margaret's Shrine:



The two unimposing blocks of dark gray stone surrounded by a low stone wall and iron railing to the east of the Parish church is all that remains of the shrine and chapel dedicated to St. Margaret.



Other ancestors, including King David I, are also buried at Dunfermline, however during the Reformation, their bodies were exhumed and put into unmarked graves. Margaret's remains were distributed to various abbeys in her homeland.

Before leaving, I slipped down to the gardens just below the abbey entrance to the remains of the tower where Malcolm and Margaret were married. Not much remains of the original tower.



I had to walk briskly to get back to the station, grab a quick bite, and catch the next bus back to Stirling and the University for the 4:00 practice.

So much more could have been seen in Dunfermline and the Abbey...there just wasn't any more time.

Tomorrow: Edinburgh and the Edinburgh Tattoo.

Day 8 August 12, 2004

My trip to Edinburgh was the one outing I did not get to everything I wanted to see. I had hoped to spend the day in Edinburgh, starting at Roslyn Chapel, then go to Holyrood Palace and work my way up the royal mile to the castle where I would meet the band for the Tattoo.

Practice ran until 11 so by the time we got to Edinburgh it was early afternoon. I learned that the last tour buses left Holyrood and Roslyn at 2:00 because of the Edinburgh Festival that was occurring at the same time. Since there was not time to go to either, I would spend more time at the castle. Two other people joined me.

We made our way from Waverly Station to the Royal Mile by way of a very long series of steps. At the top was the entrance to Edinburgh's underground city.

Far below the busy, bustling Edinburgh streets there lies a dark, quiet, forgotten place. In the mid 1980s a set of Underground Vaults were discovered - chambers that had been abandoned for nearly two hundred years. These wonderful dark rooms are built of ancient Edinburgh stone, with arched ceilings, fireplaces and 18th century wine vaults. They lie beneath the South Bridge, one of the city's main thoroughfares. The rooms, both small and large, were used as cellars, workshops and houses by those with businesses on the bridge above. The South Bridge was not given sufficient waterproofing, so the rooms were abandoned soon after they were built. The stalactites remain, high overhead under the arches. No natural light has ever reached these rooms.

The late 18th century was a time of great expansion and innovation in Edinburgh. The city was bursting out of her Medieval walls and spreading rapidly. To improve access from the Old Town to the new developments, two enormous structures were built, North Bridge and South Bridge.

The foundation stone of the South Bridge was laid in 1785 and the whole structure was completed in 1788. The bridge is supported by 19 huge stone arches, which were then divided into Vaults and used by the businesses above.

By 1790, there were nearly one hundred businesses active on the South Bridge. Many of the shoemakers, wine merchants, book binders, cutlers, jewellers and milliners had their workshop areas in the Underground Vaults.

Well the tours were booked so we didn't make the rounds of the vaults.

We decided to head directly to the castle. A glimpse down the Royal Mile looked something like this:



As you can see, it was raining. It rained the entire day. I haven't mentioned much about the weather. For our competitions, it was clear and even sunny and hot by Scotland standards (80s). Most other days it was raining or misting. I just assumed this was natural for Scotland, but the locals said this was the heaviest rain and hottest they had experienced in 10 years. They had extensive flooding while we were there.

Probably Edinburgh's oldest street, The Royal Mile connects Edinburgh Castle with the Palace of Holyrood House. It is lined with shops and this week is was also filled to capacity for the Arts Festival.

One of the old churches we passed on our way to the castle had been converted into a restaurant.





Before entering, one of the people with me said that they had forgotten their ticket to the Tattoo. I suggested he go to the ticket office and see what could be arranged and we would meet him outside the castle after our tour.

You enter the castle through the Gatehouse.



The imposing gatehouse was built in 1888, not for defense purposes but to make it look more picturesque. It replaced the more functional gate. Flanking the gate on either side are bronze statues of King Robert the Bruce and Sir William Wallace. There is no record that either visited Edinburgh castle during their lifetime.

Immediately inside the Gatehouse is the Lower Ward. The Portcullis Gate became the principle gateway into the castle following the great rebuilding that followed the Lang Siege of 1571-1573. Above you are one of the many batteries of the castle.



There has been a fortress atop the old volcanic rock for centuries. The castle dominates the skyline and is still an active military post. Needless to say, I did not get to all of the buildings. Where the cars are shown parked in front of the great gate is the Esplanade – site of the Tattoo.

Inside the Portcullis we climbed the Lang Stairs which was the original way up to the medieval castle. The 70 steps were re-laid by prisoners of war held at the castle in the 1780s during the American War of Independence.



There were three military museums we went into the National War Museum of Scotland, The Royal Scots Regimental Museum, and the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards regimental Museum.



The items contained were unbelievable. Here for example is a sterling silver centerpiece. It measured 3 feet 6 inches.

The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment) is the oldest Regiment in the British Army and as such is the senior Infantry Regiment of the Line. It was raised in 1633 when Sir John Hepburn, under a Royal Warrant from King Charles I, recruited 1200 men in Scotland. The first battle honor awarded to the Regiment was Tangier 1680, since when a further 148 have been gained in a history which has involved them in almost every campaign the British Army has fought; the last being the Gulf 1991. Their collection of uniforms, regalia, banners, prizes, trophies etc. is indescribable.

The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards (Carbiniers and Greys) were formed in 1971 by the amalgamation of three old and famous cavalry units. The origins of the regiments date back to 1678 when the Royal Scots were raised to help Charles II fight the Covenanters (religious deserters).

The National War Museum of Scotland was opened in 1933. It houses an exception collection of weaponry, banners, uniforms, artwork, and novelties.

These structures were all located in the Middle Ward of the castle grounds.

In the Crown Square of the upper ward is the Royal Palace. As the name implies the Royal Palace was the residence of royalty. The last sovereign to sleep there was Charles I in 1633 the night before his coronation.

The apartments are lavish.





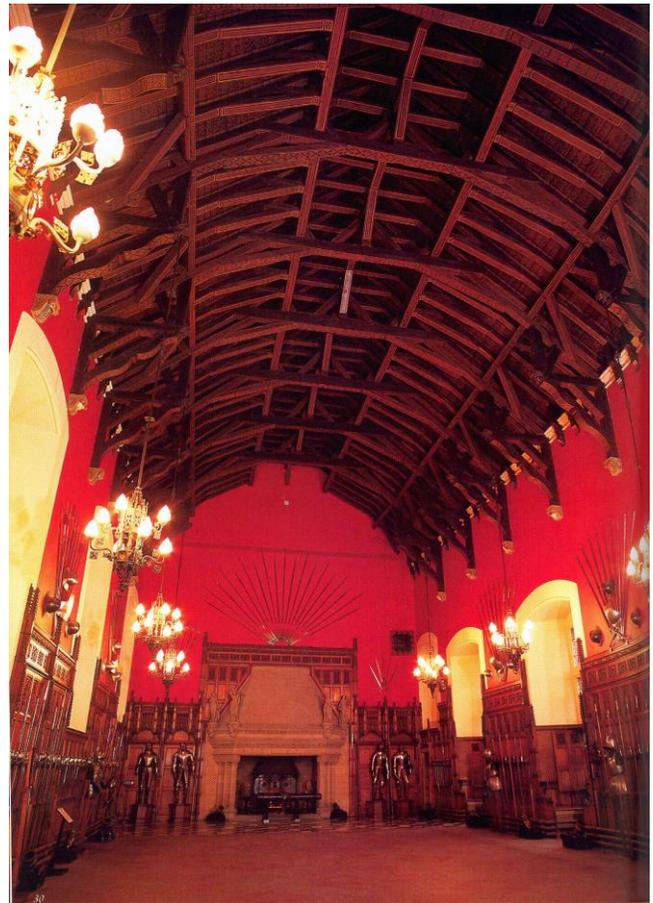
Within the same building are the Crown, Sceptre and Sword of State:



The Crown in its present form was made for James V in 1540. The Sceptre was presented to James IV in 1494 by Pope Alexander VI. The Sword of State was presented to James IV by Pope Julius II in 1507. The entrance and exit to the room are heavy vaulted steel doors modified into the centuries-old building.

Also among the royal jewels is the real Stone of Destiny. The Stone of Destiny was forcibly removed by Edward I (Longshanks) from Scone Abbey in 1296. It was shipped to Westminster Abbey enclosed within the Coronation Chair. It remained there for nearly 700 years. It has been returned to Scotland and is housed at Edinburgh Castle.

The Great Hall was built in 1511 by James IV who was killed at Flodden two years later. When Cromwell captured the castle in 1650, he turned it into barracks. When the army evacuated the building in 1886, work began to restore it to its original appearance.



The walls are adorned with weapons and armor. The mantle has a carved hood. The roof beams are all hand carved with various royal crests. The stained glass windows depict the royal coats of arms.

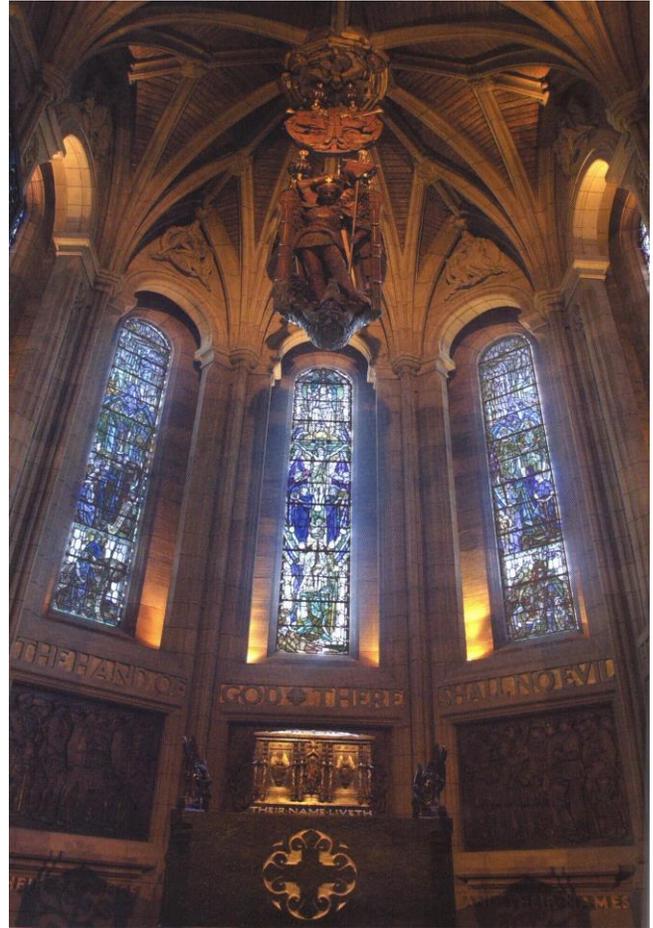
The most impressive building to me was also the most solemn. The Scottish national War Memorial is housed in the castle's former church of St. Mary's. When the garrison left the castle in 1923, the opportunity presented itself to create a memorial for those who died in 1914-1918 during the Great War.



Inside the War Memorial is the Hall of Honour or Hall of the Regiments. Banners from campaigns and wars dating back centuries are displayed along with a listing of all the dead.



In the Shrine is suspended a carved figure of St. Michael looking down upon you surrounded by stained glass windows and bronze friezes.



That's about all the time we had to spend at the castle. We found the individual just outside the gate waiting for us. He learned that since the band purchased tickets to the Tattoo in blocks, if we went down to the ticket office to verify he was with our group, then they would issue a temporary ticket.

OK. No problem. Except, that the ticket office was right where we started the day, at the bottom of the steps.

To make a long journey short, we went back down, settle the affair and climbed back up the same way we came. We decided to grab a bite before going to the Tattoo and lucked out in finding an Italian restaurant that had a table open. With the Arts Festival, we were lucky to find anything. It was an authentic Italian restaurant and the wait staff spoke very little English.

TONIGHT: The Edinburgh tattoo.



Edinburgh Tattoo

After a fine Italian meal, we worked our way back up the Royal mile towards the castle. The crowds were already forming. The program was scheduled to begin at 7:00 pm and it was already 6:00. I wondered how they could possibly get everyone onto the Esplanade and into their seats.

There were crowds of people in down every street, all funneling into the castle entrance. It was extremely well choreographed with hundreds of police on duty. There were several checkpoints along the way. One stop checked to make certain you had a ticket. A second checkpoint searched all carry-in items.

Of course it was still raining. With my Inverness on, I was very comfortable. Others were purchasing ponchos from vendors at a couple pounds sterling. Yet others were wearing dry cleaning covers...anything to keep the rain off.

The bleachers set up on the Esplanade were rock solid. There was absolutely no vibrations felt! The seats, however, were very cramped. After all, they were seating 9,000 people and every performance of the Tattoo for the entire year was sold out.

Rain as it did, the bands performed without raingear. Each band entered from the gate of the castle and flowed onto the Esplanade.



The Tattoo was a non-stop two hour show.

THE 2004 EDINBURGH MILITARY TATTOO

Fanfare - *Fighter*

Written and directed by Wing Commander S L STIRLING
Principal Director of Music, The Royal Air Force

The Massed Pipes and Drums

The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards
1st Battalion Scots Guards
1st Battalion The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment)
1st Battalion The Royal Highland Fusiliers
(Princess Margaret's Own Glasgow
and Ayrshire Regiment)
1st Battalion The King's Own Scottish Borderers
1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles
The Royal Air Force
The City of Invercargill Caledonian Pipe Band
The Canadian Scottish Regiment
The Cape Town Highlanders

*The spine-tingling sights and sounds of the world-famous
Massed Pipes & Drums*

Cheraw Cultural Dance Troupe from Mizoram, North East India

The Bamboo Dance

The Queen's Colour Squadron of the Royal Air Force

with The Band of the Royal Air Force Regiment and RAF
Pipes & Drums
Flawless drill movements without word of command

Massed Highland Dancers

The Edinburgh Military Tattoo Highland Spring Dancers with
Australia's OzScot Highland Dancers
Contemporary Highland Dance

The South African Navy Band

The sounds of South Africa

Club Piruett

World-class rhythmic gymnastics from Estonia's elite group
Gladiator

Castle Drawbridge Sentries provided by The Gibraltar
Regiment

The Military Band of the People's Liberation Army of China

With cultural dancing group
 For the very first time at the Tattoo, the enchanting world
 of Chinese music, marching and dance

The Massed Military Bands

The Central Band of the Royal Air Force
 The Band of the Royal Air Force Regiment
 The Band of the Royal Air Force College
 and The Squadronaires
 The Band of the Dragoon Guards
 The Lowland Band of the Scottish Division
 The Band of The Prince of Wales's Division (Lucknow)

JOINED BY:

The Band of the PLA China
 The South African Navy Band

ACCOMPANIED BY The Tattoo Choir (Kevock Choir)

With vocal soloist, Corporal Matthew Little, RAF + Violinist,
 Miss Rowena Macrae + Penny Whistle, Cpl Ross Munro

The Massed Military Bands and Massed Pipes & Drums

600 musicians create the unique Tattoo sound
Millennium Prayer For Peace
Highland Cathedral

Finale

Featuring the 1,000-strong cast with a
 Guard of Honour formed by The Queen's Colour Squadron of
 The Royal Air Force
Glendaurel Highlanders
Atholl Highlanders
Holyrood
National Anthem
Auld Lang Syne
Abide with Me
Last Post
 Lone Piper - *Donald Blue*

March Out

Scotland The Brave
We're No' Awa' Tae Bide Awa'
The Black Bear



The massed bands were impressive, but even they had their crooked lines and difficulty coordinating so many players. The videos you see show a flawless performance...but editing can do wonders. They have numerous performances to choose the best frames.

Each year the Tattoo features different bands and performers from around the world. The fast pace of one performance following the next adds to the excitement.

The Bamboo Dance from east Africa I had only seen once before on TV. It was one of the better cultural performances. Dancers move their feet between bamboo poles held horizontally just above the ground in a latticework. The poles are slapped together creating a rhythm and the dancers move between the poles. Not a very good description I know, but you almost have to see it performed to understand the process.

The Royal Air Force Squadron was a precision marching drill team. Their gun work was excellent – especially considering the wet conditions.

The Navy band from South Africa was interesting. Not surprising, they came onto the Esplanade in their whites, but playing music with a more traditional African rhythm. They did a crowd-pleasing rendition of “The Lion Sleeps Tonight” – O wimbo way!

The group from Estonia was less impressive. Perhaps it was because the weather dampened the ribbons used for the dance.

The band from China was very precise as you might expect and included ethnic instruments along with their brass.

But it was the massed pipes and drums that were the most stirring. It was amazing the speed at which the pipers played. The atmosphere really added with a heavy mist and fog rolling onto the Esplanade as they were playing. When all 600 played "Highland Cathedral", there couldn't have been a dry eye in the place.

The finale included fire works (which you really couldn't see through the rain) and a fly-over – or at least a VERY good sound system of a fly-over.

It was a Wonderful experience I'll be sure to repeat if I'm ever there again.

Tomorrow: Practice for the Worlds.

Days 9 & 10 August 13 & 14

Glasgow on the Green

I've combined the last two days of the trip since they are related. On **Friday**, the band thought it would be helpful to travel into Glasgow and do a walk-through on the green and practice on the field to get a sense of where we would be going and just what to expect. In retrospect, it was a waste of time.

Robert arrived with the bus mid-morning and I slept most of the ride to Glasgow...I had already seen most of the area already. I wasn't impressed with Glasgow, or at least the parts we saw. It is/was an industrial center for Scotland and the industrialization shows in the soot-covered buildings. At least where we drove through there were bars on all the store windows, graffiti on the walls, and trash blowing in the streets.

We had contemplated staying in Glasgow at the University since it was within walking distance from the competition green. We learned that the neighborhood was not safe after dark so we chose Stirling instead – to our complete satisfaction.

We parked next to the green and close to the imposing "People's Palace." The Palace is intended as a cultural center. I did not go into the building, but the drummers had lunch in the solarium and said it was very classy.



Glasgow is attempting to rejuvenate the downtown area by preserving some of the older buildings and encouraging business. This large building intrigued me because of the architecture and the tile work.



When we walked onto "The Green", nothing was set up. It had rained so much during the week, the vendors had not even set up their booths. None of the competition circles were laid out and there were just a couple other bands practicing. We put in an hour's practice and left.

Back at the University, I spent the evening packing since we would be staying at a hotel next to the Glasgow airport the following night and flying out the day after the competition. Somehow, everything fit back into the garment bag and suitcase (expandable sides helped), but then I really didn't buy many souvenirs.

The following morning, Robert was waiting for us with the bus for our final trip and shot at the gold. We arrived at the Green around 10 am and were shown to a parking area. There was a bit of a hassle since we were not mailed our passes...as if we didn't already look like a pipe band. Once parked, we grabbed our gear and headed for the entrance.

Within the span of just a few hours, the vendor tents had been erected, trailers moved in, booths set, and circles marked.

We staked out a claim to an area just outside the entrance where we would park our gear when not competing. We had enough family and friends along to leave someone behind to mind the gear when we weren't present.



We had a few minutes to hit the vendors before warming up and tuning. I picked up a lapel pin and a couple of pipe-case stickers to show I really was there. After tuning, we started to make our way to the warm-up area.



Let me put the scope of the competition into perspective. Again, there were four grades of bands, I, II, III, and IV. Grades II, III and IV had two divisions – splitting the competition in half. The winners from each half would then compete against the other. There were also Juvenile bands competing. In total, there were more than 250 bands competing on the same day in various circles. If you figure a minimum of 10 pipers for each band (and most carried 15), then there were over 2,500 pipers and more than 2,000 drummers. There were over 30,000 spectators.



It was a nice day, shifting from overcast to sunny and warm – our kind of day for competition. Being used to competing in heat and humidity we had no problems to speak of.

We sounded best (of course) in the warm-up area. Without the pressure of competition you always sound better. When it came to our turn in the competition circle we marched to the start line to a single drum tap. The band was brought to attention, then “at ease.” The Pipe Major got the signal to start from the Steward, “Pipes Up.” “By the right. Quick march.” And off we went.

You have four minutes to determine your placement. If your drones come in early, that's ten points off. If your first note is not together, that's 10 points off. The judges are looking for any excuse to narrow the field down. We really sounded good. We were told that two of the judges were tapping their feet and just listening doing very little writing. A few minutes later, it's all over. Then the anxious time of waiting for the results to be announced to see if you made the cut for the finals.

This gave everyone time to grab a quick bite, hit the vendors and listen to the other competition.



I went to the Grade I (Professional) competition. Grade I bands perform twice. They do a march medley (collection of quick march tunes) and a SMR Medley

(Strathspey, March, Reel). I caught the tail end of the march medley competition and then grabbed a bite to eat.

Word arrived that we did not make the cut. The judging scores were:

Piping Judge #1 = 7th
 Piping Judge #2 = 4th
 Drumming Judge = 13th (that was the clincher)
 Ensemble Judge = 7th

We missed the finals by two points. We did beat the following local bands:

Lanark & District
 Baul Muluy Pipes & Drums
 Welsh Piping Society
 Lamarkshire
 Irvine District
 Vale of Clyde
 Uddingston Strathclyde
 Sons of Scotland
 Prtlethen & District
 West Lenton & District
 Linwood Caledonia
 East Kilbride

While terribly disappointed, I thought we did very well. When Oklahoma Pipes and Drums competed in their first world competition, they finished dead last.

I spent some time listening to the MSR Competition for the Grade I Bands, and watched some of the juvenile competition. It's amazing to watch children 8-10 years old competing. The pipes are as big as they are. They represent the future of piping. Unfortunately, we don't seem to be able to attract young students.



Later that afternoon we learned that we did not have to stay for the closing ceremonies. While I was disappointed to hear that the band didn't want to stay – I wanted to see what they looked like – as it turns out it was good that we didn't. Usually, closing ceremonies last an hour. The World ceremonies last three hours! We would have had to be standing on the field for the entire time.

As it was, our bus missed the work traffic flowing out and into Glasgow and arrived at the hotel next to the airport in time for dinner. Before leaving the "Green" we had taken up a collection for our bus driver as well as given him one of our cap badges that were custom made. The drummers also gave them one of their shirts with caricatures of the drummers on the back entitled "Sticking It." Robert was very touched by the gesture.

I booked a shuttle for 6 AM the following morning. There were the usual customs etc. and not much to report on the trip home...other than they forgot to put my luggage on the airplane from Chicago to Omaha. Thank goodness I always carry my pipes on the plane as a carry-on. I, and a dozen or so other people on the flight, went to the collections desk, turned in our claim numbers and were told that the luggage would be delivered yet that night. Turns out that "late that night" was 1:15 the following morning. Nothing was damaged for me, but the snare drums all came back with broken heads and hardware.

In short, I could not have had a better trip. The pipers scored a second and fourth at Bridge of Alan, a seventh and a sixth at North Berwick, and a seventh and a fourth at the Worlds. We earned high marks from Scottish judges and beat out numerous Scottish pipe bands. I could not have squeezed in any more side trips than I did. I visited everywhere we had ancestors buried that I could get to in a half-day trip and was able to attend the NN function at Borthwick Castle.

The food was good, the piping was hot, the scenery was awesome...I could not have asked for anything more.

The band is already talking about competing again in three years. Time will tell all.